An Account of the Empire of China and the Sinological Thoughts of the Dominican Domingo Fernández de Navarrete

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Abstract:

The Dominican friar Domingo Fernández de Navarrete came to Asia with his colleague Juan Bautista Morales to assist the affairs of the Chinese Rites Controversy during the mid 17th century. His work *An Account of the Empire of China: Historical, Political, Moral and Religious* was then published in Madrid in the year 1676, forming part of another great Spanish sinological text after *The History of the Great and Mighty Kingdom of China* (1585) by Juan González de Mendoza. The text of Fernández de Navarrete pioneeringly depicted various facets of Early Qing China, influencing a great number of European philosophers on the topic of Chinese civilization. A contemplation of "the Other" derived from the colonial experiences in the Americas, and a comparison of Chinese culture with the European was reflected. In the text of Fernández de Navarrete, a "Chinese imagination" of the time can be traced.

Keywords: Domingo Fernández de Navarrete, *An Account of the Empire of China: Historical, Political, Moral and Religious,* Spanish Sinology, Chinese imagination

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In the year 1676 the book *An Account of the Empire of China: Historical, Political, Moral and Religious*[1] (*Tratados históricos, políticos, éticos y religiosos de la monarquía de China*) was published in Madrid, in which various aspects of Early Qing China were depicted. Its author, the Dominican friar Domingo

1 The English translation was fulfilled by London literates H. Lintot (1703—1758) and J. Osborn (1704—1743) in 1732, and the title in English thus remained unchanged in the hispanic Sinology studies. A more proper and linguistically contemporary translation would be "Historical, Political, Moral and Religious Treatises on the Kingdom of China."

Fernández de Navarrete (1610—1689), was born in the city of Peñafiel, Spain, and entered the Order at the age of sixteen. He was a theology student and served as a Catholic preacher, that is, until the Dominican Order participated in the expedition to the Great China Area. Fernández de Navarrete was chosen as a member of the expedition and was then sent to Asia in the year 1646. According to Fernández de Navarrete himself, the decision came from his self-recommendation, in which he highlighted the tales and successes that the Mendicant Orders had achieved in the Philippines as the reasons behind his own motivation (Navarrete 294). Meanwhile, most past research also mentioned the influence of the Dominican Juan Bautista Morales (1597—1664), who had entered mainland China in 1633 and ignited the famous Chinese Rites Controversy, polemic that would last for centuries. Fernández de Navarrete entered mainland China in 1659 and devoted the rest of his life to "China narration." Based on his personal experiences and also referencing several sinological texts of the time, his work *An Account of the Empire of China: Historical, Political, Moral and Religious* received great praise since the moment it came off the press. The publication was written in seven volumes. The first and second volumes provide a panorama of Chinese civilization, its history and customs. In the following two volumes, the author began to approach the inner spirit of this Eastern Empire. Confucius' thoughts were first systematically introduced to the Hispanic worldview, as well as a Castilian-language version by the author of the *Mingxin Baojian* 明心寶鑒. The fifth, sixth, and seventh volumes introduce journals and related documents collected by the author, which subsequently became important historical materials for further study to the early European sinologists. Fernández de Navarrete's text displays the influence of predecessors like Francisco de Xavier, Martín de Rada, and Juan Cobo. Moreover, unlike the texts of his ancestors of the Order, the naturalistic knowledge of mainland China was also reflected, setting up a new tradition of exploring the natural science of Asia, a project which was subsequently succeeded by the Franciscans Manuel de San Juan Bautista (1656—1711) and Pedro de la Piñuela (1650—1704).

An Account of the Empire of China: Historical, Political, Moral and Religious was the first and only publication by the author, due to his other works were banned by the Spanish Inquisition for containing anti-Jesuit opinions, thus remaining unpublished. In this sense, the best way of serving the study on the author and his thoughts lies in approaching this work, which reflects not only the reality of the China of 17th century, but also that of the Far East Empire imagined by Europe at the time.

The Dominican Order and the Mission in Asia during the 17th Century

The Dominican Order, one of the Mendicant Orders, was established early in 1215. Its first attempts toward proselytization in Asia were made by the Spanish friar Ascelin of Cremona in 1247, when the story of the Mongol Empire was sent back to Europe. Comprising the first relayed impressions of the East, the missionary messages of that time proved legendary and illusionary. Further explorations was required. However, considering the chaotic condition of the European regimes during the Middle Ages, the dispatches to the Far East proved relatively infrequent, and mainly concentrated on the affairs of the Inquisition and the American Conquest after the Columbus' discovery. As for how they reached China, the "Jesuit route," passing through the Indian Ocean, was then officially available only to Portuguese power, and thus expelled the Mendicant Order from this sphere. It was not until the year 1565 that the "seaway of Urdaneta" was first put into use, enabling the Mendicant friars the opportunity to reach the Philippine Islands from the city of Acapulco, New Spain (Mexico). Manila quickly became a "transfer station" of the Mendicant friars (Sanz 121), where they resided and obtained information relating to mainland China. The approach through the overseas Chinese residents in Manila provided the Spanish not only with commercial businesses, but also with knowledge concerning the language, culture, and even detailed military messages of the mainland.

The Chinese Empire, at the middle of the 17th century, happened to be weathering a political tsunami. The activities of Domingo Fernández de Navarrete in China coincided with the early years of the Qing Dynasty, in which epochal alterations, political turmoil and new trends of thoughts combined and brewed into a religious atmosphere distinct from that of the Late Ming Dynasty. The Jesuits' "Accommodation Strategy" once sheltered the European Catholic missionaries during the Ming dynasty, but this came to be seen as evidence of crime from the perspective of the Qing courtier Yang Guangxian (楊光先 1597—1669). Qing Governors, who tended to associate the European missionaries with the White Lotus Society 白蓮教, also held a cautious distance from the missionaries. The absence of a thorough knowledge on the European religions confused the Qing court in matters concerning the Catholic activities in the country, The quick diffusion of a foreign religion appeared as a great sensation to the court, which was continuously harassed by various rebellious local communities. In this condition, it seemed quite logical to see Catholicism as a kind of "heresy" — in much the same way as the missionaries would remark about Confucianism. This accusation first derived from the Late Ming Dynasty, when the local rebellion of Liu Tianxu 劉天

緒 was sentenced as both Catholicism and the White Lotus Society (Shen 2697). Till the epoch of Kang Hi 康熙, mentions of this "relation" were repeated by Yang and many of his colleagues, alleging the harmful result of Europeans joining the calendar-making department of the Empire. The emperor, at the beginning, chose to placate both sides, and refused the characterization of Catholicism as a hostile army. However, the activities of Juan Bautista Morales once again pushed the missionaries to the edge.

The Dominican Morales, once working in mainland China during the Late Ming Dynasty, was disgruntled by the "Accommodation Strategy" established by the Society of Jesus. After all, the tradition of worshiping the ancestors and Confucius was considered "idolatry" in the opinion of the Dominicans, who insisted on pure beliefs in the Catholic conventions. Morales went back to Europe in 1640, with handwritten reports to the Roman Curia on missionary activities and the obstacles they faced in the Far East. After appealing for years, in 1645 he finally convinced the Pope of the necessity of "rectifying" the local conventions of China. Fernández de Navarrete was thus chosen as one of his companions on his journey back to Asia (Cummins 72).

The New Continent and the Formation of Domingo Fernández de Navarrete's Thoughts

The journey to Asia was quite long and exhausting. Fernández de Navarrete, like many of his predecessors, had to detour across the Atlantic Ocean, sailing to China from Acapulco. The famous Manila Galleon, however, suspended the voyage of 1647. Navarrete had to reside in the American continent temporarily and wait for the next departure. It was at this time when he got acquainted with the bishop Juan de Palafox (1600—1659). As a dedicated apostle of the humanist Bartolomé de las Casas (who had also lived and worked in the New Continent for decades), Juan de Palafox functioned like a "mentor" to Fernández de Navarrete and introduced the thoughts of Bartolomé to the Dominican newcomer.

Having been activated in the first decades of the colonization, Bartolomé reflected on the "conquest" in the Americas and the chaos in ruling and evangelizing the natives, and then came upon a "solution." The rights of the natives were one of the demands he expressed in his *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (1552), with the purpose of protecting their rights to survive (Casas 26-34). However, Eurocentric discourse still haunts his text, in which the sense of European superiority as rulers or conquerors was repeatedly mentioned. The foundation of, and precondition for, saving the natives was keeping their physicality

and obliterating their mentality. That is to say, the natives were supposed to play the role of a necessary prop in the American evangelization, while the American pre-Columbian civilization and religion were left not given their due respect. (In fact, the pre-Columbian culture would eventually be almost erased by the so-called civilizing culture). Bartolomé's self-contradiction was "inherited" by Navarrete, who further pubshed to devleope this discussion of treating and contemplating "the Other."

When he first arrived the Americas, Fernández de Navarrete made a sarcastic taunt to the natives who gave their newborns Castilian names. The fact was that, ruled by the Spanish military, the aborigines had to submit to the culture of the invaders in order to live. However, Fernández de Navarrete concluded that this attempt was rather a show of "Indian vanity" (Navarrete 15). According to his text, this kind of event occurred frequently during the first months of his arrival. The Other was taken as an undignified antithesis to European culture. On the other hand, with an ampler "discovery" of the Otherness in Asia, a gradual transformation of attitude appeared in the following narrations by the author. Meditations about the "administrative style" and contemplative perspective of the Other frequently occurred in the texts of Fernández de Navarrete after he reached the Philippines and China. The Philippine natives, according to Fernández de Navarrete, proved "not that vulgar, but more civilized, mild and full of wisdom" compared to the native Americans (Navarrete 29). The American Indians thus transformed into a "criterion" for both reflecting on European culture and evaluating the Asian. A "Civilization/Barbarism" dialectics was thus established, in which the Great China, along with many other Asian countries in the narration of the author, were depicted positively. The "extreme praise" of the Chinese Empire which stunned Europe in the era of the Enlightenment, in this sense, actually derived its framing against the backdrop of contrasting with the New Continent. In comparison with the American Indians, the Chinese community residing in Manila proved articulate and peaceful, and, most importantly, they went to mass, as was relied by the missionaries. With a deeper exploration of the Asian cultural environment, the author further refined his contemplation methodology, pointing out that "the Tartare and the Japanese [were] by no means barbaric," and went on to appeal for a fair perspective on Asian cultures (Navarrete 14). The "neutrality" manifested in contemplating Asia stood in contrast against the attitude he had shown towards the native cultures of the Americas.

The disdain for American Indians was rooted in the mindset of Europe during the Age of Discovery. This prejudice against American natives first appeared in the texts by Columbus, who had been in constant search for "men with a tail"

when he had landed on the New Continent (See Colón 189-190). From the times of Bartolomé and then those of Fernández de Navarrete, the conqueror's pride eventually transformed into inertness, and the "New Continent" became a symbol of the availability of the overseas Spanish power. The colonization continued in the Philippines, Malacca, India, and other areas of Asia. The criticism on the Americas could be replaced with criticism of China, Japan, and any other countries that failed to conform to the conventions of Catholicism. Praise appeared only if the local condition fit with evangelization, that is, if it presented a proper condition for the greater expansion of the Spanish Empire. On the other hand, criticism against Chinese culture was severe not just during the Enlightenment but in fact had already bloomed by the 16th and 17th centuries. It was not in Martín de Rada or Alonso Sánchez (who never compared China to Europe or the New Continent), but the juxtaposition already appeared with the novelist Daniel Defoe (1660—1731) who, although as a Puritan, openly manifested his criticism toward Chinese culture, remarking it as "even more foolish than the Indians" (See Starr 437).

Sarcasm against the Americas became a sort of fashion during the 17th and 18th centuries, especially the latter. This hostility appeared more harshly in the texts by Cornelius Franciscus de Pauw (1739—1799) and Georges Louis Leclerc (1707—1788), who criticized the American natives for their "inferiority" and "retrogradation." As for Rousseau's (1712—1778) myth of "the noble savage," in it the American natives were once again idyllically elevated and idealized. In conclusion, the Other, being a reflection of the needs of its observer, is always shaped and also malleable by the observer. In the case of Fernández de Navarrete, to come back to the point, his experiences in the Americas and his stay in Manila could be considered as the basis of the conception of China in his thought, and to a large extent explain the formation of his sinological thought.

An Account of the Empire of China and the Sinological Perspective of Domingo Fernández de Navarrete

Fernández de Navarrete arrived in Manila in 1648, where he learnt Tagalog, a native dialect, in order to evangelize the local community. He became surprisingly affluent, and in five months the author could communicate with the natives and began the process of evangelization (Navarrete 29). The Dominican Province of Our Lady of the Rosary, set up by the friar Juan de Castro in 1587, took charge of the missionary activities of the Order in Asia and offered Fernández de Navarrete great help in accommodating himself in Asia (Aduarte 47). Fernández de Navarrete decided to enter mainland China after having stayed in Manila for a decade.

Having arrived in Macao in 1657, Fernández de Navarrete spent a year wandering in this "Jesuits' area," and secretly sailed to Canton in the following year. He then successfully joined the Dominicans hidden in Fujian Province (which is situated near Canton) in 1659. It was not until this year that Fernández de Navarrete began to learn Chinese. The approaches to learning Mandarin proved completely different to those of learning Tagalog, as the author commented upon the former as "ogreish but admirable" (Navarrete 105). By the moment of his departure, it is estimated that Fernández de Navarrete was able to understand thousands of Chinese characters, which was basically sufficient for his activities in the Empire.

The learning of the Chinese language, on the other hand, appeared to be a tradition established in the period of Francisco de Xavier (1506—1552), a practice which was maintained by both Jesuits and Mendicant friars. Despite the various conflicts between these two sects, the importance and necessity of mastering the language of the Other coincided with the practices of many of the missionaries. Dating back to the era of Marco Polo, the various dialects in provinces of "Cathay" were already noticed and mentioned (Polo 31), and the same information was shared in the text of the Portuguese Gaspar da Cruz (Cruz 28). These two pioneers were said to have taken the "language problem" into consideration, although neither ever intended to start learning it. Martín de Rada, the Augustine, who had already learnt the Otomi Indian language—the native tongue of the Americas—and the Visayan of the Philippines, once requested a residence from the governors of Fujian so that the missionaries could get acquainted with the language, convention and habits of the Empire (San Agustin 320). He collected Chinese publications from the Parian and Fujian, though he ended up with realizing the difficulty of mastering the enormous number of Chinese characters (Rada 28). The first European missionary that initiated the "language career" was Francisco de Xavier, who first acquired Chinese characters from Japanese publications during his stay in that country (See Zubillaga 408-409). The friar Juan Cobo of the Dominican Order counts as another exemplar of his time. In the era of the Chinese Rites Controversy, missionaries like Diego de Pantoja (1571—1618), Juan Bautista Morales and Fernández de Navarrete represented the peak of mastering this abstruse language, and also inherited Chinese and European culture.

The *Dictatus Papae* of Inocencio X, after being carried by Juan Bautista Morales to the Qing court, aroused the irritation of the Emperor. According to the Vatican Edict, the Chinese convention of rituals and sacrifices were ordered to be abandoned. These "Chinese Rites" that the Vatican targeted, in fact formed part of the basis of the government; thus, this kind of interference by Catholics was seen as

an obvious crossing of the line. The Emperor Kang Hi then demanded the closure of almost all of the Catholic churches, and missionary activities were banned and punished. Missionaries—Fernández de Navarrete and Juan Bautista Morales included—were then arrested and escorted to Canton, where they anxiously waited for further instructions from the Emperor. The author was imprisoned from 1666 to 1670. In his work *An Account of the Empire of China: Historical, Political, Moral and Religious* these experiences were meticulously recorded, and became one of the most precious historical and sinological documents of the 17th century.

1. The "Denomination and Reality" of "China"

Fernández de Navarrete inherited the Odyssean progress present in the discussions of "China" within the European intelligentsia. The highlighting of these achievements might have been made in an unconscious manner by the author, who indeed did draw a full stop for this "ever-lasting topic." The topic of "Cathay" and "China," after having haunted European adventurers for centuries, finally came to the horizon of our author.

The country named "Cathay" first appeared in the texts of the famous Marco Polo, who depicted it as "El Dorado"—the golden land of the world. The great inspiration found within this text motivated a large number of adventurers, and Polo's narrations thus became a canonical reference in locating "Cathay." Christopher Columbus, a devoted follower of Polo, convinced himself of the certitude of his discovering "India" after looking at the gold ornaments the American natives wore (Colón 376). This same Columbus then took a tribe at war with the island of Cuba for the "Cathay" of legend (Colón 50), thus ending up mixing the geographic conception of Europe on both the Asian and American issues. The historian O'Gorman (1906—1995) commented on the "invention" of the Americas by Columbus (O'Gorman 3). In this sense, the "reinvention" of Asia by the great mariner was seen as forming another valuable academic contribution.

The concept of "Cathay" went on to be still mentioned—although doubtfully—in the texts of missionaries till the first half of the 16th century, leaving the country of "China" seemingly as "unknown." The Jesuit Francisco de Xavier once, in 1546, wrote about a conversation with a Portuguese merchant he met, who "told him of a country named China" (Zubillaga 196). "Cathay" and "China" were obviously considered isolated from each other or unrelated in the mind of Xavier. The mist had gradually faded by the times of Martín de Rada, who directly pointed out that the "Cathay" in Marco Polo was just another name for the Chinese Empire (Rada 15). Rada reached this conclusion from his personal experiences and explorations

in Asia, and aimed to bring an end to the discussions and confusions regarding this topic. However, Rada's conclusions resulted only in even greater suspicions and doubts, due to the fact that in Rada's explanation, the relation (or differences) between the two naming conventions was left unsolved. Were "Cathay" and "China" two countries that historically occupied the same territory? Or was "Cathay" once a dynasty of Great China? Questions of this kind were asked and in turn led to so heated a discussion that intellectuals like Gerard Mercator (1512—1594) and Peter Heylin (1599—1662) never arrived at a common ground.

The question was brought back into the spotlight and primarily solved during the era of the Chinese Rites Controversy. The Spanish Jesuit Deigo de Pantoja calculated for the first time the latitude of Peking, which precisely conformed with the location ascribed to "Cathay" in Marco Polo's chronicles (Pantoja 12). The location of these two geographical denominations was found to be the same, which revealed an isomorphism between both naming conventions. This held until Fernández de Navarrete, the final inheritor of the historical discussion on the concept of China by the Europeans, stated in his text that the denomination "China" had never been used as a title for a certain dynasty, but that it was rather a unified name taken on by foreigners (Navarrete 1). Furthermore, Navarrete mentioned various "epithets" of the country, like Tien Hia 天下, Hoa Kue 華夏 and Chung Hoa 中華 (Navarrete 2); names with which the Chinese described their own land, none of which ever referred to a dynasty or to a concrete country. Thus, the reality of a remote China became clearer to the European readers. By this point, the "dynasty-territory" issue momentarily came to an end. With the "Taibin" 大明 in Rada and the depiction of the Qing Empire of Fernández de Navarrete, the dynasties were first indicated. This signified a closing of the loop regarding the problem between the denomination of China and reality of China in the eyes of Spanish sinologists.

In addition, the division between the provinces and metropolis was another focal point of the author in exploring the "reality" of the Empire. In *An Account of the Empire of China: Historical, Political, Moral and Religious*, the author noted fifteen Chinese provinces in total (Navarrete 5-7), when the actual condition of the administrative division during Early Qing China was eighteen. It can be deduced that the author failed to obtain a thorough understanding of the time. On the other hand, the information in the works of Martín de Rada also played a misleading role on Navarrete's narrative. According to Rada, the Chinese Empire was divided in fifteen zones, which included thirteen provinces and two capitals (Peking and Nanking) (Rada 22). The information of Rada was completely erroneous as a geographical depiction of the Late Ming. However, the administrative alteration

during the Early Qing era must have been ignored by Fernández de Navarrete when referring to the "Bible" of Martín de Rada. Readers and researchers can trace out the intertextuality between the two authors. Considering the fact that a unified worldwide toponym system had not yet been invented in the 17th century, one can draw a line by looking at the same spelling of the name of Chinese provinces in Martín de Rada and Fernández de Navarrete. For example, denominations like "Pe Chi Li" 北直隸, "Xansi" 山西 and "Xan Tung" 山東 are shared by Rada's and Naverrete's texts, while contemporary narrators like Cruz and Pereira never used these spellings when mentioning these provinces. What we can discover is that Navarrete followed the example of Rada, subtly citing his data, and by this ended up committing several errors that ignored his own experience of being physical located in the new dynasty. A direct extraction from Rada thus produced an obvious error in Navarrete's text. In this sense, we can conclude that Naverrete's concept of China basically came from Martín de Rada, which had been inherited, developed, and to some extent mechanically utilized by the Iberian writings at the time.

2. The Social Structure of China and the Approaches to Chinese Thoughts

The "four hierarchies of social classes" 四民 were also noticed by Fernández de Navarrete. These groups—"Literates," "Laborers," "Officials" and "Merchants"—were introduced specifically in the text (Navarrete 51), providing a relatively authentic depiction of ancient Chinese society. In the discussion, however, the author repeatedly emphasized the value of agriculture to the Chinese Emperors. "Laborers" in the text of Fernández de Navarrete's text were defined as peasants, with craftsmen and other kinds of "laborers" being classified under the category of "merchants." Listed as the second highest rank of the people in the country, the peasants were supposed to enjoy the great esteem of the Emperor, something which was highly praised by Fernández de Navarrete. Agriculture seems like a topic that would be irrelevant to religion, but in the author's mind the two were closely connected. In the following chapters of this publication, the history of the "Buen Ti of the Han Dynasty" 漢文帝 was picked as an exemplar (Navarrete 115), illustrating that only when the material burden was alleviated could the pursuit of mentality be made possible.

The discussion of the social classes of the Empire was supplemented with inner congruence, as in the third and fourth volumes of the work, the author introduced a great number of Chinese philosophers and ideas to his readers. The *Analects* 論語 of Confucius appeared in translation. The author also compiled the comments and translations of Confucius' words written by the Jesuits Prospero Intorcetta

(1626—1696) and Niccolo Longobardi (1559—1654). Navarrete left annotations on the understandings of the Jesuits, providing the text with even more polemical and academic features. Intorcetta's previos translation, in the author's eyes, was not up to standard. Moreover, instead of introducing Confucius' biography, Navarrete focused on helping uncover his philosophical and educational thoughts. In this activity, however, the author erroneously listed *La gran enseñanza* 大學 and *Mecio* 孟子 as the opus of Confucius, while each of those works belonged to other philosophers.

As for the translation of the *Mingxin baojian*, which occupied the fourth volume of Navarrete's work, the author presents similar but yet distinctive attention to this Chinese publication in comparison with his predecessor, the Dominican Juan Cobo. The friar Juan Cobo reached the Philippines in 1587, almost a century earlier than the arrival of Fernández de Navarrete. According to the Dominican documents, Juan Cobo communicated with the natives and learned Chinese in months, and even wrote academic articles in this language—this being the *Pien Cheng Chiao Chen-chu'an Shih-lu* 辯正教真傳實錄 (Aduarte 218-219). The *Mingxin baojian* was originally a Chinese "textbook" written by the Ming literate Fan Liben 范立本, functioning as an "introduction on morality" to educate the common people. The book was titled "Beng Sim Po Cam" by Juan Cobo, while Fernández de Navarrete named it "Ming Sin Pao Kien," both transcribing the title from the southern Fujian pronunciation. The Castilian subheading of the book was translated in different ways by the two friars. Juan Cobo translated the name as "Rich Mirror of a Clear Heart" ("Espejo rico del claro corazón"), while Fernández de Navarrete chose an intricate but more illustrative interpretation: "Precious Mirror of the soul, or Mirror that illuminates and communicates the hearts and internality of the people" ("Espejo precioso del alma o Espejo que alumbra y comunica luzes al coraçon y interior del hombre"). It could be noted that both friars noticed the educational value of the book, and that the relatively "newcomer" Navarrete seemed to capture more thoroughly the book's insight. The "mirror," here playing the role of an "exemplar," refers to the thought and sentences of the ancient Chinese philosophers compiled in the book. This way, the explanation of Fernández de Navarrete complemented the original connotation of the book. The translation of Juan Cobo was published in the year 1593. As such, Fernández de Navarrete's text probably used the former version as reference. However, in almost all Fernández de Navarrete's texts and documents, the name of Juan Cobo never appears, making their quite possible influential relation harder to trace. Another difference between these two translations was that, in comparison to Juan Cobo who faithfully adhered to the original text, Fernández

de Navarrete added many of his annotations in the work. A "spiritual relation" between the Chinese thoughts and many of the European religious texts was invoked by the author. Philosophers like Santo Agostinho, Tito Livio, and Santo Tomas are to be found referenced in footnotes throughout the translation, which revealed a pioneering attempt in relating and communicating between Asian and European cultures.

Furthermore, the comparison between Juan Cobo and Fernández de Navarrete here was to be continued in other aspects. In his letter "Letters from Parian" ("Cartas de Parian"), Juan Cobo mentioned and praised the local Fujian opera, which mainly included comedies, costume drama, and love story plays. Juan Cobo expresses great appreciation of the moral sense in those Chinese plays, in which the protagonists always conformed to a set of social rules and never disobeyed morals (Cervera 95). In Navarrete's text, although the relation of influence between the two friars was left unexplicit, the discussion of Chinese plays was further developed. Fernández de Navarrete commented that the Chinese love story plays out in a "less harmful" manner than that of European drama, which always ended up leading the youngsters to vice (Navarrete 156). A clear influence of the European morality play, as well as that of works of Calderón de la Barca (1600—1681) and Lope de Vega (1562—1635) can be spotted in Fernández de Navarrete's tastes. The moral sense in evaluating the Other always remained part of the Spanish missionaries' criteria.

3. Complex Attitudes toward the Chinese Empire

It has to be admitted that the shadow of Marco Polo's work is present throughout the first chapters of Fernández de Navarrete's work. The admiration and imagination of an Eastern empire was inherited from the medieval travel writers and entered into a large number of European sinological texts of the Early Modern times. According to Fernández de Navarrete, if European countries took the administration method of Early Qing China as a model, most of their conflicts could be solved (Navarrete 2). The praise of the Qing system mainly focused on the military plane. For example, the author commented that Tartare soldiers were far better than the European lansquenets even though "being infidels to Catholicism" (Navarrete 13). The image of the Emperor Kang Hi was set up as an exemplar an "energetic, generous and peaceful" ruler (Navarrete 8). Early Qing China at one time seemed to Fernández de Navarrete a utopia, an Eden with an intelligent governor in place of God.

A shift in the author's attitude occurred during his stay in Canton, where he came to possess more informative pieces of knowledge regarding the country

and was thus able to form for himself a "thorough impression" of the Far East Empire. The extreme affluence of the society present in Marco Polo's texts finally "evaporated" in Fernández de Navarrete's text. The bubble burst when the author noticed the high number of beggars and miserable peasants (Navarrete 27). Thus, a more "authentic" China was revealed, and more imperfections of the country rose to prominence, and in passages in which the land was described as of low-yield land (Navarrete 40), and in which the "inner conflicts" of Chinese philosophy were laid bare (Navarrete 51), the author changed his prior attitude in such a sudden manner that his previous depiction of the country eventually faded.

The most misleading information about Chinese society present in the complex "sino-conception" of Fernández de Navarrete is that related to a "rumor" about an edict of the Emperor Kang Hi. The author claimed that the emperor reduced the fixed income of one of Confucius' descendants, and thus criticized the suppression of intellectuals at the court. This piece of information came from hearsay from the missionaries exiled from the Capital in Canton. The author failed to give a more detailed picture about the identity of the philosopher's poor descendants, and to mention the reasons behind their losing their privileges. According to the historical documents of the Kang Hi epoch, the descendant in question might have been Kong Shangren 孔尚任 (1648—1718), who was dismissed from office for writing the play *The Peach Blossom Fan* 桃花扇. However, the case related to Kong Shangren happened in the year 1700, decades after the publishing of the work of Navarrete. Another possible candidate was the poet Kong Zhenxuan 孔貞瑄, a 63rd-generation descendant of Confucius and activated in the second half of the 17th century. According to Qing documents such as the *Qingren bieji zongmu* 清人別集總目 (Li 261) and *Queli Shixuan* 闕裡詩選 (Kong 434), the biography of Kong Zhenxuan happened to coincide with the time frame of Navarrete's narration. The experience of resigning from office occurred in the Kong Zhenxuan story made it possible that he is the one referred to in Navarrete. On the other hand, the fact that most of the documents related to Kong Zhenxuan come from the literates and historians of Shandong Province (for the reason that Kong himself was born in the very area), raises another curious question. That is to say, how did Fernández de Navarrete hear the story of a literate who was not so famous at the time? As discussed above, the author was active in the southern part of China, far away from Shandong Province and its chronicle documents. However, when he was taken into custody in Canton, Fernández de Navarrete had the opportunity to contact almost all of the missionaries in China—Jesuits and those of the Mendicant Orders included—, among which there were the Franciscans, who had established firm connections with the author.

The friar Antonio de Santa Maria Caballero (1602—1669), who once established the first Franciscan church in Shandong in 1633, happened to be amongst those exiled. The two Mendicant friars had been in contact for long, which could possibly explain the reference to the accusation of Kang Hi. Nevertheless, the information proved obviously erroneous in both factuality and veracity. The protagonist, supposing it was Kong Zhenxuan, was never forced to surrender his political or civil privileges, nor did the emperor deserve the charge of disdaining Confucian intellectuals in his court. On the contrary, Kang Hi made a solid contribution toward the enhancement of the status of Confucian philosophy. The episode recounted in this narration had been miscommunicated, and thus exaggerated. In other words, could it be possible that the author himself had intended to give a negative impression of the Confucian School in China to the European intellectual world? In Navarrete's text, the criticism of Chinese thought—the framework of Confucian theory and many of the folk religions and their conventions—was always juxtaposed against a glorification of modern European technology. Repeatedly pointing out facts such as the Chinese ignorance of the concepts of latitude and longitude, the lack of mathematical skills and the absence of physics education was all part of Navarrete's attack (Navarrete 431), an action borne out partly due to his own frustration at the Chinese Empire during its anti-Catholicism era, and partly from the necessity of evangelization during the Chinese Rites Controversy. From the epoch of Francisco de Xavier to the time of Fernández de Navarrete, Confucian power had always functioned as an unsurmountable obstacle greatly impeding the diffusion of Catholicism. As shown especially during the Chinese Rites Controversy, the Confucian thought proved a firm political curtain that deflected the approaches by the Catholic missionaries. Fernández de Navarrete, as a Dominican brought into China by Bautista Morales, was always supposed to stand by his side, which means that he was always ready to oppose the "Accommodation Strategy" of the Jesuits. In this sense, the accusation that the emperor had curtailed the privileges of the Confucians in the country might be an attempt at questioning the authority of both the Qing Court and Confucianism. The incident thus described a governor that disdained the knowledge-suppressing philosophical school that had until then failed to serve the development of the country. However, considering the consistent subtle attitude of Fernández de Navarrete, his conformity with Bautista Morales could still be cast into doubt. The neutral-toned narration blurs, to some extent, the possible personal bias of the author, which encourages a further exploration of this topic.

Conclusion

Fernández de Navarrete left for Europe in 1670. After almost a decade of preparation, the work *An Account of the Empire of China: Historical, Political, Moral and Religious* finally saw the light of day. The information within partly came from his personal experiences, and partly from other European sinological texts, like that by Rada, as mentioned above. In an era when the Portuguese and Italian Jesuits' publications comprised most of the Early Modern European Sinology market, the publishing of Fernández de Navarrete's work was actually a counterweight against the non-Spanish narrations. The ambition of its author—to break through the blockade of the Jesuits' texts and struggle for a voice of the Dominican Order and his own country—proved particularly clear.

An Account of the Empire of China: Historical, Political, Moral and Religious was one of the earliest European chronicles of the Qing Empire. Unlike Fernández de Navarrete, predecessors such as Martín de Rada and Diego de Pantoja only had the chance to portray the Late Ming reality. The change of dynasties provided brand new information to Europe. Moreover, the author also made a comment on a kindred work of his time, which was Martino Martini's *De bello Tartarico historia*. The author explicitly warned European readers about the misleading messages in Martini (Navarrete 231). Navarrete's accusations mainly focused on the fact that Martini, compared to Navarrete himself, just lingered in the marginal southern areas of the Late Ming and Early Qing territory, and did not come into contact with the reality of this Eastern Empire. According to Fernández de Navarrete, the physical and mental distance of Martini was part of the reason behind the incredible nature of his narration. Further exploration about the contradiction between Fernández de Navarrete and Martino Martini was made by Cummins in *The Travels and Controversies of Friar Domingo Navarrete, 1618—1686* (Cummins 218), which reveals both the academic and political struggles of the two authors. At the time Martini's work was adopted as an important source for *The History of the Conquest of China by the Tartars* by Juan de Palafox and many other sinological texts of the 17th century Europe. Because of this, a more realistic Qing narration tradition ought to be traced back to Fernández de Navarrete, who, unlike Martini and Juan de Palafox, was physically living and working in mainland China, and was in contact with various classes of the Chinese society. Martino Martini never responded to the allegations made by Navarrete. Although the criticism was, thus, unilateral and did not fully involve both parties, a competition hidden in the discourse of topics relating to the Far East can be identified.

Furthermore, a consideration of the fact that Juan González de Mendoza's *The*

History of the Great and Mighty Kingdom of China (1585) had been published nearly a century before Fernández de Navarrete's work, helps further frame the latter as the second Spanish contribution to the field of European Sinology. Juxtaposing these two sinological texts, researchers can easily identify traits in the formation of Early Spanish Sinology. The thematic concerns consists of topics like the geography, administration, religion, custom, and lifestyle of traditional China. The foundation of the Spanish sinological narration derived from Martín de Rada, González de Mendoza, Juan Cobo, Diego de Pantoja, and even Bartolomé de las Casas. Those were the missionaries who left important contributions to the academic field of Asian studies and deserved the merit of being called sinologists. In this list, however, Fernández de Navarrete set a precedent for lowering the contemplative horizon, changing the focus from honing in on the upper classes and discussing the grand narrative of China toward depicting the relatively common and unadorned daily life of Early Qing society, which, in Lach's words, demonstrated his absolute admiration of the common people (Lach 169). The conversion of unbelievers was part of the reason for his focus on the rural life and the livelihood of common civilians of Early Qing China. In the texts of his preceding countrymen, such as those by Martín de Rada and Diego de Pantoja, the concentration on the Other was always located within the interactions with the upper levels of Chinese society. Topics such as China's four social classes and their livelihoods were first developed by Fernández de Navarrete. This progress in themes arose first in the texts of Navarrete, which revealed a combination of the spirit of the Mendicant Order with the very call for evangelization against the cultural background of the Early Qing. The Mendicant friars—who were unlike the Jesuits and lacked any helpers in the capital—had to choose rural zones as their main area of activities. Having stayed in the rural zones of Macao, Fu'an, and Canton for decades, Fernández de Navarrete had the chance to be in contact with a wide swath of the population, as opposed to only a small coterie of Chinese officials only, a direct contact which allowed him to learn about the most basic national character of this remote land. These experiences provided the author with a more authentic understanding of Chinese culture in comparison with that of his predecessors. Meanwhile, the "China Empire" found in the texts of Fernández de Navarrete was by no means just the object of complete admiration. He expressed not only positive opinions, but also criticism and disagreements with it, as well as misconceptions about it. Fernández de Navarrete's work eventually afforded him acclaim throughout the European continent. The Chinese Empire depicted in his work became an indispensable source for European Sinology in the 17th century.

Fernández de Navarrete uncovered a "China" that inherently conformed to the development strategy of the Order, and that probably conformed to the prejudiced expectation of its European receivers. The "China" invented during the 17th and 18th centuries would eventually reveal itself to have been made out a conflation between the cultural environment of its time and its civilians, a self-sustaining reflection within the Baroque mirror.

Generally speaking, the majority of sinological texts of the 17th century came from Jesuits' hands. Works by Álvaro Semmedo, Martino Martini, and Athanasius Kircher spread rapidly, garnering a wide recognition amongst the European intelligentsia. Missionaries from Portugal, Italy, and Germany occupied a leading position in the discourse, even while the Spanish began to lose their colonies and venues of expression. In this circumstance, the popularity that Fernández de Navarrete had achieved proved particularly rare and valuable, as it provided new perspectives on China's image. For example, the comparison between China and Europe greatly sparked insights by some of the philosophers of the Age of Enlightenment, regardless of the fact that the "China" in the text was actually a reflection of their own desires or lacks. As for the author himself, the establishment of a "counterpart" closely relates to the decline of Spain's national strength during the reign of King Felipe IV. Thus, the "China" described by Fernández de Navarrete's brush had to shoulder the responsibility of stimulating and assisting the development of his own country. The idealization of a "model" also inspired important philosophers such as Diderot, Montesquieu, and Voltaire. The French sinologist Jacques Gernet (1921—2018) mentioned the impact of this work on the philosophical thought of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, mainly praising its author's depiction of Confucianism and its influence on Chinese society (Gernet 19). On the other hand, in consideration of the fact that the work of Fernández de Navarrete (as discussed above) also referred to the imperfections of Early Qing China, the "neutrality" of the work, which was an element scarcely seen in most of the sinological texts of the century, also stood out and, to some extent, paved the way for the criticism of Chinese culture that would take place in the following century.

After its publication, the *An Account of the Empire of China: Historical, Political, Moral and Religious* was translated into Italian, English, German, and French. The overseas conquests of the Spanish Empire and the Chinese Rites Controversy affairs were the strongest explanation for the success of the book (Busquets Alemany 236). The activities of Juan Bautista Morales once provoked great discussion regarding Chinese philosophy. The "Confucius Problem," already having piqued the curiosity and caught the attention of European intelligentsia for

decades, went on to become one of the most discussed topics during the years of the Chinese Rites Controversy. In this way, the work of Fernández de Navarrete met the expectations of the European intelligentsia in regard to information on the Far East. The "identity" of Europe, in the words of Delanty, explored and formed itself against the background of the collision with the East (Delanty 84). Furthermore, the contact and conversations between the Fernández de Navarrete and other European sinologists of the time—such as Athanasius Kircher and Martino Martini—also led to a deeper meditation about China in Europe. In this process, a sort of Spanish-inflected Sinology, emanating from Domingo Fernández de Navarrete's text, was thus enunciated. This hint would eventually successfully shape much of the subsequent development of Sinology in Europe.

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